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AMENDMENTS THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1 1. (Previously presented) A method for supporting virtual path/virtual channel (VP/VC)
2 groups in asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) switching systems that implement ATM automatic
3 protection switching (APS) in which traffic flows from a source on two paths and a destination
4 selects traffic from only one of the paths at a time for further processing, the method comprising:

5 creating a groups table, the groups table having an entry for each of the two paths of
6 every active VP/VC group, each active VP/VC group having an associated set of member
7 circuits, each entry indicating whether the cells for that path of that VP/VC group should be
8 forwarded or discarded, each entry referenced by means of a pointer field;

9 accessing a relevant entry in the groups table when a cell arrives on one of the two paths,
10 the relevant entry associated with the one of the two paths, the relevant entry including a status
11 value; and

12 discarding the cell if the status value is indicative of a discard status or forwarding the
13 cell if the status value is not indicative of the discard status.

1 2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein forwarding the cell comprises:
2 maintaining a lookup table including a lookup table entry for each circuit in the set of
3 member circuits of each VP/VC group for forwarding cells; and
4 forwarding the cell as specified in the lookup table entry for that circuit.

1 3.4. Cancelled

1 5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein a number of supported groups is
2 determined in part by a number of bits allocated to the pointer field associated with the circuit
3 for the cell.

1 6. (Cancelled)

1 7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[6]] 1, wherein a value of zero in the pointer
2 field of the groups table indicates that the corresponding VC circuit or VP circuit is not a

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3 member of any of the VP/VC groups, and that a forward/discard status of the respective circuit is
4 stored in a lookup table entry associated with the circuit.

1 8. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the groups table is implemented
2 as part of a module of the switching system.

1 9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein a number of supported VP/VC
2 groups is determined in part by a size of the groups table.